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SUBJECT: ZANZIBAR: AMBASSADOR LENHARDT LUNCHES WITH
PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL MOHAMED ABOUD

REF: A. DAR ES SALAAM 870

[1](#)B. DAR ES SALAAM 779

[1](#)C. DAR ES SALAAM 756

[1](#)D. DAR ES SALAAM 749

[1](#)E. DAR ES SALAAM 63

[1](#)F. 2008 DAR ES SALAAM 844

[1](#)G. AND 2008 DAR ES SALAAM 444

Classified By: Ambassador Alfonso Lenhardt for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: On December 19 Ambassador Lenhardt invited to the Residence for lunch Mohamed Aboud, a jocular and charismatic Zanzibari politician of the ruling "Revolutionary Party" (known by its Kiswahili acronym, "CCM - Chama cha Mapinduzi"). Aboud is among the top contenders to replace President Karume after the 2010 General Elections (Karume is limited to two terms by the Zanzibari Constitution). Aboud has been one of the architects of the present reconciliation process in Zanzibar, which he detailed for us. The idea is to amend the Constitution so that a unity government can be formed based on the percentage of representation gained from the General Election. Aboud is pro-America, pro-Union and pragmatic about Zanzibar nationalism. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (C) A native of the island of Pemba, hotbed of dissension and an opposition Civic United Front (CUF) stronghold, Aboud believes he is the one who could reconcile differences between the islands of the archipelago, between the two parties, and between Zanzibar and the mainland. Aboud wants to move away from Zanzibar's residual "revolutionary," socialist rhetoric and institutions that, he says, only serve to isolate Zanzibar.

[13.](#) (C) Ambassador Lenhardt agreed with Aboud that the key traits for a leader are honesty and fairness. Success comes from a leader who leads from the front, the Ambassador counseled. Frankness between friends also should remain a hallmark of the U.S.-Zanzibar relationship, the two agreed. While much of Aboud's fortunes rest on the success of a political deal between CCM and CUF (which he helped put together), he asserted there is no direct linkage between interparty reconciliation and his chance of becoming CCM's candidate for President in 2010. Aboud said the battle to succeed Karume will take place in CCM's National Executive Council (NEC), where Aboud said he has been a member since

long before Karume or Kikwete's respective presidencies.

RECONCILIATION: AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION FOR A UNITY GOVERNMENT

¶ 14. (SBU) According to Aboud, the next step in reconciliation is to have the CCM government table in Zanzibar's House of Representatives a constitutional amendment that would allow power sharing based on the percentage of votes achieved by all participants in a General Election. This would need to be done prior to the next elections expected in October 2010.

¶ 15. (C) The key to the reconciliation plan, in Aboud's view, was that it was all-inclusive. At the beginning of multipartyism there were only two viable parties. In Zanzibar that remains the case to some extent, however one of the problems with the "Muafaka" peace process is it left out all those but CUF and CCM. Other, smaller parties were growing in influence. They would likely never get enough power to rule but could play the role of spoilers. Having a "past the post" system would tacitly be all-inclusive, but in practice keep both parties in power and thus make it easier to manage compromises. The other thing about a constitutional amendment mandating a unity government is that it would lock in power-sharing beyond specific administrations and take some of the political heat off the Chief Executive in implementation. Aboud said that even if he himself were to be elected President in 2010, absent a

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constitutional amendment now it would be difficult if not impossible to bring in CUF members post-election over the heads of party activists who would have helped guarantee the CCM win.

¶ 16. (C) Aboud described how the process would likely work. Minister of "Constitutional Affairs and Good Governance," Ramadhan Abdulla Shaaban, would draft legislation to amend the constitution to mandate proportional power-sharing (Note: Shaaban is one of three ministers who report directly to the President rather than the Chief Minister. End Note.). The draft would be presented and agreed upon by the Revolutionary Council (a quasi-NSC-like organ made up of the cabinet, Speaker of the House and other notables). Once agreed on by the Revolutionary Council, the draft would be submitted to Parliament for action. There are only two sessions of Parliament scheduled in Zanzibar before the General Election, and the final session will be seized with budgetary matters. Therefore, the unity government constitutional amendment should be gaveled in at the next session, to begin late January or early February.

POLITICAL HURDLES AHEAD

¶ 17. (C) Aboud said the legislative strategy for a unity government in the lead-up to October 2010 was workable, but "workable" and "possible" were different in Zanzibar. An early obstacle would be the desire of Seif Sharif and other CUF leadership to get into Zanzibar's government now, "at any cost," through some kind of packaged "unity government." As a CCM-insider, Aboud claimed no special insight into the inner workings of CUF. However, from what he said he understood, Seif Sharif wanted into the government now in order to be able to control, or at least influence, the workings of the Zanzibar Electoral Commission and the Zanzibar ID card process (NOTE: CUF supports having a special Zanzibar-only identification and "citizenship" process that differs from mainland Tanzania, but complains that the issuance process favors CCM in a partisan way. END NOTE).

¶ 18. (C) Other CUF members (probably the elected members) complained that they needed to show their supporters some kind of concession from CCM and the Karume government now.

The party had three times forged power-sharing agreements with CCM only to have them ignored after each election. A fourth failure could be fatal for CUF, Aboud said.

¶19. (C) On the CCM side there are numerous hard-liners who reject a unity or coalition government out of principle, under any circumstance. Many still held the Communist view of politics that an institutional monopoly of power was needed to make "revolutionary changes among the masses." Another dilemma for the pragmatists of the party is that any CUF member who would enter government now would do so at the cost of CCM incumbents, most of whom gained their seats from party affiliation. There would be mutiny in the ranks if party militants were to be cut loose in favor of the opposition.

¶110. (C) Karume himself was another impediment. Aboud said he pays lip service to the "Plan" during closed door meetings, but has been reluctant to take any decisive action. He said Karume was of the view that he was President until October 2010, no matter what. The "reconciliation handshake" with Seif Sharif was his "historic contribution," and whatever followed was the problem of others.

¶111. (C) Aboud hoped a deal could be reached where CCM hard-liners could take credit for preventing a unity government under Karume while at the same time a constitutional mechanism would have automatic effect for the next administration. Since most of Karume's cabinet would be replaced even under another CCM mandate, the people in power now would have less to lose. Also, a constitutional

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amendment would survive past the current lame-duck government. For CUF the trick would be to convince them that a "bird in the hand is not worth two in the bush," that any stint in government now would last only as long as Karume was in power (i.e., until October 2010). A constitutional amendment, however, would ensure CUF power-sharing by law. Political campaigning would remain important, since both parties would have to earn their proportion of government.

¶112. (C) Aboud concluded that at the present time, the plan had a chance of success or failure in equal measure. If the U.S. wanted to be helpful, it should continue what it was doing: highlighting the need for reconciliation and linking it with development. Laud leaders for any move toward progress, including if only baby steps, and advocate support for the reconciliation process in private, when asked, or when hearing each respective side air its complaints.

ON ZANZIBARI NATIONALISM

¶113. (C) Aboud said that sometimes Zanzibari nationalism stood in the way of common sense. At its worse, blind jingoism sometimes hurt the archipelago. For example, the recent dust-up between Zanzibar and the mainland as to who would control any oil found in the Pemba Channel could have been handled better. Zanzibar's insistence that it had exclusive competency over exploration and exploitation of any gas or oil fields was absurd, since there was no one in Zanzibar who had expertise in these matters. Moreover, Zanzibar was not solvent enough to launch any kind of exploration on its own. Therefore, through nationalism, Zanzibar had just cut out its most eager finance partner - the Union Government. Meanwhile, Kenya was not sitting still. It was moving ahead with a package funding deal and any successful drilling it might eventually conduct could be from the same pockets of oil.

¶114. (C) Similarly, during the Zanzibar Presidency of Salmin Amour (1990-2000), there was a move to homogenize taxation in Tanzania: all taxes would have been collected union-wide and Zanzibar (only 3.5 percent of Tanzania's population)

would have received roughly 10 percent of revenue. For nationalistic reasons, Zanzibar did not want to cede tax collection authority. The net result is that now, at a time when the East African Community is homogenizing duties, Zanzibar is going in the opposite direction. Indeed, according to Aboud, Zanzibar's unilateral tax regime needed to be overhauled. "No modern nation earns its primary revenue from import/export duties." For similar reasons, Zanzibar had no business in monopolizing the clove trade. Wealth creation should be the government's focus.

¶15. (C) In summary, Aboud said pragmatism should rule the day, not blind ideology. What was good for the region and for the Union was usually good for Zanzibar. It was not a zero-sum game. He even commented on the "absurdity" of the official name for "Zanzibar" - the "Revolutionary Government." He said that during the real revolution, Zanzibar was just called "Zanzibar." The "Revolutionary" business was something created by the country's second President, Aboud Mohamed Jumbe, in the 1970's after Abeid Karume's assassination. Ambassador Lenhardt agreed, saying excess baggage of the past just weighs a country down. Aboud suggested it also served to alienate potential friends.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

¶16. (C) Another reform might be in the realm of Local Government. Aboud noted that shehas, politically appointed leaders at the village level, did not exist on the mainland, where local leaders were elected. "Shehas" were a colonial legacy left over from the Sultan, he said. To make them

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accountable to their constituents it would take only an administrative action by the President. It could be done quickly and would not need a Constitutional amendment. Meanwhile, Regional and District Commissioners were, in Aboud's view, necessary to keep as appointed positions since they existed to ensure national policies were implemented in the region.

COMMENT

¶17. (C) Aboud clearly wants to be President. He sees himself as the compromise candidate between the Kikwete Union Government and the Karume government's faction. Aboud was certain that the next President of Zanzibar would be from CCM, not CUF. He also was of the view that any President in 2010 would have to be a Kikwete loyalist.

LENHARDT